

# The NUMISMATIST

*for collectors of*

COINS, MEDALS, TOKENS AND

PAPER MONEY



# The NUMISMATIST

Registered U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices / Founded 1888 by Dr. George F. Heath

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## Sources of Emblems and Mottoes

BY

ERIC P. NEWMAN, A.N.A. No. 4624

THE charm and quaintness of the emblems and mottoes on Continental Currency from 1775 to 1779 has often given rise to inquiries as to their source but apparently no specific answers were heretofore available. The emblems and mottoes were messages of hope and courage for the American cause during the Revolutionary War and were intended to create confidence in the unity and dignity of the government under the Continental Congress.

The "Fugio"—sundial—"MIND YOUR BUSINESS" insignia and the 13 linked states—"AMERICAN CONGRESS WE ARE ONE" design are the most important of these devices because their appearance on the February 17, 1776 Continental Currency paper money was responsible for their use both on the 1776 Continental Currency coinage and in slightly modified form on the first official coin of the United States, the 1787 Fugio Cent.

The old challenge to clear up who was the creator of the fascinating artistry of the Fugio design was expressed in 1957 as "How do you go about answering a supposedly unanswerable question such as, who designed the Fugio Cent, and how come?"<sup>1</sup> It was always obvious that the advice that time flies so mind your business was an aphorism typical of the sayings of Benjamin Franklin's fictitious philosopher, Poor Richard.<sup>2</sup> However, the source of the many other emblems and mottoes had never been researched.

In the ten issues of Continental Currency the designers used an aggregate of 22 circular emblem and motto devices. Each denomination was keyed to

one insignia for identification convenience. An analysis of some new findings as to the origin of these emblems and mottoes may lead toward the elusive goal.

### Previous Commentary

An early comment as to the source of these devices was made by Samuel Breck in 1843 in his *Historical Sketch of Continental Paper Money* (p. 14) when he included the following hearsay: "Those devices and pithy sentences are said to have been composed by Benjamin Franklin and Charles Thompson, aided by the Latinists of the Continental Congress."

J. Hammond Trumbull, a Connecticut historian, wrote a letter to the Editor of the *American Journal of Numismatists* dated July 3, 1875<sup>3</sup> which included the following comment:

"The devices on Continental Bills may have been *selected* and, some of them, *adapted* by Judge Hopkinson; but in no other sense can they be regarded as his production. Most of them are taken from emblem books, or from Dutch medals of the previous century."

In the summer of 1917 while preparing his dissertation for his doctorate at Harvard University, George E. Hastings discovered some unpublished correspondence passing between Francis Hopkinson and the Continental Congress during 1780.<sup>4</sup> These communications related to the claim of Francis Hopkinson for compensation for various designs which he stated that he had created. He included in his "La-

1 Marianne F. Miller, "On Making Some Fugio Sense," *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*, Vol. 23, No. 7 (July 20, 1957), p. 1265.

2 Eric P. Newman, "Poor Richard's Mottoes for Coins," *The Numismatist*, Vol. 29, No. 12 (Dec., 1956), p. 1363, reprinted in *Franklin and Numismatics* (1966).

3 *American Journal of Numismatics*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Oct., 1875), p. 36.

4 George E. Hastings, *The Life and Works of Francis Hopkinson*, Chicago, 1936, pp. 240-246, etc.

# Emblems and Mottoes on Continental Currency

FIRST USED IN 1775



USED ON  
BACK OF  
\$20 & \$30



# Emblems and Mottoes on Continental Currency

FIRST  
USED  
IN  
1776



face

\$1/6

\$1/3

\$1/2

\$2/3

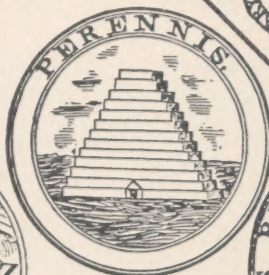


back

FIRST USED  
IN 1778



\$40



\$50



\$60

FIRST USED IN 1779

\$35



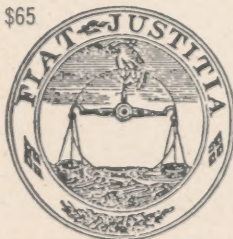
\$45



\$55



\$65



\$70



\$80





hours of Fancy" such major items as the Flag of the United States of America, seven devices for the Continental Currency, The Seal of the Board of Treasury,<sup>5</sup> The Great Seal of the United States of America, etc. While consideration of his claim and its subsequent denial on August 23, 1781 was included in the Journals of the Continental Congress, the fact that devices on Continental Currency were an element in the claim was not evident until Hastings disclosed it.

The knowledge of the details of the Francis Hopkinson claim gave rise to speculation that Hopkinson might have

toes all being in Latin. There was an immediate interest in the meaning of this imagery. A translation and detailed explanation of their meaning was promptly published in the Pennsylvania Gazette of September 20, 1775, in the Pennsylvania Magazine in December, 1775, in almanacs of the period, etc.<sup>7</sup> This data has been copied and condensed in both early and recent catalogs on the subject.<sup>8</sup> Yet there has never been any information published as to its source.

## The Discovery

In 1964 the author wrote Edwin

Typical \$3 Continental Currency bill showing emblem and motto copied from Camerarius emblem and motto on opposite page. (Photographs by L. Harold Spradley)



created the Fugio design rather than Franklin.<sup>6</sup> Who created the other emblems and mottoes continued to be sidetracked.

## Early Translation of Mottoes

The original issue of Continental Currency dated May 10, 1775 contained eleven emblems and mottoes, the mot-

Wolf 2nd, well-known bibliographic scholar, and Librarian of the Library Company of Philadelphia, asking what emblem or motto books were in Philadelphia in 1775 and if they contained any emblems or mottoes used on Continental Currency. His reply, "I hit pay dirt for you," was succinct and so he had. He located in that library seven emblems with their mottoes in the 1702

<sup>5</sup> See: Edward R. Barnsley "The Treasury of North America," *Paper Money*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter, 1965), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> E. J. Theisen, *The Numismatist*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (Jan., 1958) p. 22; C. D. Grace, *Colonial Newsletter*, Mar., 1966, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> See: Peter Force, *American Archives*, 4th Series, Vol. III, p. 746, which has the same text but gives no source.

<sup>8</sup> Wayte Raymond, *The Standard Paper Money Catalogue* (1940, 1950, 1955); Ted N. Weissbuch and Richard T. Hooper, *Price Catalogue of U. S. Colonial and Continental Currency*, Chicago, 1965; and many other prior publications.



XXXII.

# EXITUS IN DU- BIO EST.



*Sunt dubii eventus incertaq; praelia Martis:  
Vincitur haud raro, qui prope victor erat.*

Example of emblems and mottoes from the Emblem Book by Joachim Camerarius.



Mainz edition of *Symbolorum ac Emblematum Ethico-Politicorum* by Joachim Camerarius and one emblem with motto in the 1660 Amsterdam edition of *Idea Principia Christiano-Politici Symbolis ci expressa* by Diego Saavedra. An even greater surprise was that the four volume Camerarius work had Benjamin Franklin's handwritten shelf marks, C 22 N 24, C 22 N 25, and C 22 N 26, respectively, in the last three volumes. These books had therefore been part of Franklin's library. The Saavedra had been rebound and any shelf mark identification it might have had was lost.

After Benjamin Franklin's death in

gress show that on June 23, 1775, when matters concerning the May 10, 1775 issue of Continental Currency were being authorized, Benjamin Franklin was one of five persons selected to "be a committee to get proper plates engraved, to provide paper and to agree with printers to print the above bills." Thus Franklin's official connection with the original preparation of Continental Currency in Philadelphia makes the discovery of the source of emblems and mottoes in books in Franklin's library in Philadelphia a basis for convincing conclusions. Franklin was obviously involved in the selection of emblems and mottoes.

Typical \$6 Continental Currency bill showing emblem and motto copied from Camerarius emblem and motto on opposite page. (Photographs by L. Harold Spradley)



1790 his library passed to his grandson, Temple Franklin who, before leaving for Europe, promptly disposed of the library to Robert Morris, Jr. By 1801 the library was offered for sale in Philadelphia by Nicholas G. Dufief, a bookseller, from whom William McKenzie bought many of the books for his collection.<sup>9</sup> In 1828 McKenzie gave the scarce Camerarius and the Saavedra publications to the Library Company of Philadelphia (established in 1731).

The Journals of the Continental Con-

gress show that on June 23, 1775, when matters concerning the May 10, 1775 issue of Continental Currency were being authorized, Benjamin Franklin was one of five persons selected to "be a committee to get proper plates engraved, to provide paper and to agree with printers to print the above bills." Thus Franklin's official connection with the original preparation of Continental Currency in Philadelphia makes the discovery of the source of emblems and mottoes in books in Franklin's library in Philadelphia a basis for convincing conclusions. Franklin was obviously involved in the selection of emblems and mottoes.

<sup>9</sup> Edwin Wolf 2nd, "The Reconstruction of Benjamin Franklin's Library: an Unorthodox Jigsaw Puzzle," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, Vol. 56 (1962), p. 1.



XCVI.  
PERSEVERAN-  
DO.



*Quid non perficiat labor improbus? aspicias, arbor  
Ut cadat à mersu Castoris assiduo.*

b z

CROCO-

Example of emblems and mottoes from the Emblem Book by Joachim Camerarius.



After Wolf's discovery the author undertook a study of the contents of many early emblem books and motto listings, including collections at the British Museum Library and Cambridge University Library. The author's daughter-in-law, JoAnn P. Newman, combed the libraries at Harvard University. The combined results to date as to Continental Currency are given in the accompanying table. In addition, the emblems and mottoes used on the New York paper money of 1775 and 1776 and on South Carolina paper money of 1777 (Dec. 23, 1776 Act) were located in *Emblematum Repositorium* (Nurnberg, 1732) by J. C. Weigels.

Naturally those Continental Currency emblems and mottoes which were only applicable to the American Revolution could not be expected to be found previously published in that form, such as the 13 link device on the back of the fractional issue, the 13 layer pyramid on the face of the \$50, the 13 star emblem and the confederation motto on the \$40 and the reference to four years of war in the motto on the \$70. Yet adaptations of previously published emblems and mottoes or parts of them were to be expected.

Originality could only be claimed for two of the eleven introduced in 1775, for both of the two introduced in 1776, for the one introduced in April 11, 1778, for two introduced on Sept. 26, 1778 and for four of the six introduced in 1779. Before applying other facts to these findings a review of Francis Hopkinson claims seems timely.

### *Francis Hopkinson's Participation*

Francis Hopkinson (1737-91) was thoroughly educated and broadly experienced. He had capabilities as an artist, poet, song writer, musician, lawyer, essayist, economist, churchwarden, educator, classicist, etc. He was vivacious, genteel, ingenious, trustworthy and accurate according to his contemporaries.<sup>4</sup> He had been a signer of the March 21, 1771 issue of Pennsylvania bills of credit. He was familiar with heraldry and participated in designing the seals for the American Philosophical Society in 1770 and the State Seal of New Jersey in 1776. He was elected to the Continental Congress

from New Jersey on June 21, 1776 and came to Philadelphia on June 28, 1776. These dates are significant in that he was not even connected with the Continental Congress when the 11 emblems and mottoes were placed on the May 10, 1775 issue and when the 2 emblems and mottoes were placed on the February 17, 1776 issue. Among other appointments he was added to the Committee on the Treasury on September 30, 1776 and was selected as Treasurer of Loans on July 27, 1778.

His service in the Treasury department was at a time when nine new emblems and mottoes were used. It has been shown that two of these were taken from prior sources leaving seven which were newly developed.

On May 25, 1780 Hopkinson sent a letter<sup>4</sup> (see on next page) to the Board of Admiralty as he was Commissioner of the Continental Navy Board from November 18, 1776 until August, 1778. In revising his list of accomplishments, in an effort to have this bill allowed as a claim for \$7200 instead of wine, the words "7 Devices for the Continental Currency" were clarified further as "Seven Devices with Mottoes for former Emissions of the Continental Currency." The last of the seven emissions dated January 14, 1779 had been authorized November 29, 1779 and thus that 1779 issue was included as one of the "former emissions."

The reference to "The Borders, Ornaments & Checks for the new Continental Currency now in the Press," having been made on May 25, 1780, was to the first of the state issues guaranteed by the United States under the March 18, 1780 Resolution of the Continental Congress. These issues were then being printed by Hall & Sellers in Philadelphia who were the printers of all Continental Currency. New Hampshire, Virginia and Massachusetts had already approved the guaranteed state issues on April 29, 1780, May 1, 1780 and May 5, 1780 respectively, and five more states were soon to approve. On April 20, 1780 Oliver Ellsworth and Francis Kinloch had been authorized by Congress to expedite the preparation of the March 18, 1780 Resolution bills and having regulated the shape and ornaments were discharged by Congress on July 3, 1780.

GENTLEMEN:

It is with great Pleasure that I understand that my last Device of a Seal for the Board of Admiralty has met with your Honours' Approbation. I have with great Readiness, upon several Occasions exerted my small Abilities in this Way for the public Service; &, as I flatter myself, to the Satisfaction of those I wish'd to please, viz<sup>t</sup>

The Flag of the United States of America  
7 Devices for the Continental Currency  
A Seal for the Board of Treasury  
Ornaments, Devices & Checks for the new  
Bills of Exchange in Spain & Holland  
A Seal for the Ship Papers of the United States  
A Seal for the Board of Admiralty  
The Borders, Ornaments & Checks for the new  
Continental Currency now in the Press, — a  
Work of considerable Length  
A Great Seal for the United States of America,  
with a Reverse. —

For these Services I have as yet made no Charge, nor received any Recompense. I now submit it to your Honours' Consideration, whether a Quarter Cask of the public Wine will not be a proper & a reasonable Reward for these Labours of Fancy and a suitable Encouragement to future Exertions of a like Nature.

I sincerely hope your Honours will be of this Opinion & am with great Respect

Gentlemen  
Your very humble Servt  
Fra's. Hopkinson

There were many opponents to Hopkinson's extensive claims and most of them knew or could readily ask whether he did what he said he had done. His claim was approved by the Auditor-General and by the Commissioners of the Chamber of Accounts, but side-stepped by the Board of Admiralty, the Board of Treasury and the Continental Congress after many deliberations. No one challenged it on the merits and thus its accuracy is virtually confirmed.

Thus a conclusion can be drawn that the seven devices Hopkinson claims he created are the seven new devices for the \$35, 40, 45, 50, 60, 70 and 80 which appeared during the period of his membership in the Continental Congress and during the period of his official connection with the Treasury Department. These were prepared for the issues of April 11, 1778, September 26, 1778 and January 14, 1779.

By the foregoing attribution, Hopkinson has been effectively removed as an alternate for the originator of the "FUGIO" and the 13 link devices on the February 17, 1776 fractional Conti-

nental Currency issue. Therefore further positive evidence in Franklin's favor should be reviewed.

### *The Amazing Franklin*

Franklin had used in Poor Richard's Almanac for 1758 "In a Corrupt Age the Putting the World in Order Would Breed Confusion; Then e'en Mind Your Own Business."<sup>2</sup> Thus the primary idea for the Fugio motto had been used by him. The cliché that "Time Flies" was well known then by almost everyone. Franklin during 1776 and in spite of his age was still capable of bubbling out mottoes of the Poor Richard type, as shown by his letters on coinage written from France in 1779 suggesting many more mottoes to be placed on proposed copper coinage.<sup>2</sup> The use of a combination of words and objects for a message was a technique previously used by Franklin in the rebus, *The Art of Making Money Plenty in Every Man's Pocket*.

Franklin had long experience in the preparation of paper money for the in-



# Table of Sources

Denomination	Motto	Translation	Source*
Fractional (Face)	FUGIO—MIND YOUR BUSINESS	Time flies so mind your business	Franklin creation
Fractional (Back)	AMERICAN CONGRESS WE ARE ONE	—	Franklin creation
1	DEPRESSA RESURGIT	Though crushed it rises again	Camerarius I-58
2	TRIBULATIO DITAT	Affliction enriches	Camerarius I-84 Weigels p. 21, No. 7
3	EXITUS IN DUBIO EST	The outcome is in doubt	Camerarius III-32 Weigels p. 27, No. 21
4	AUT MORS AUT VITA DECORA	Either death or an honorable life	Camerarius II-52
5	SUSTINE VEL ABSTINE	Either sustain yourself or abstain	Camerarius I-41 Weigels p. 41, No. 16
6	PERSEVERANDO	By perseverance	Camerarius II-96 Weigels p. 39, No. 21
7	SERENABIT	It will become tranquil	Camerarius II-22
8	MAJORA MINORIBUS CONSONANT	The large colonies are in harmony with the small colonies	Saavedra No. 61; Weigels p. 9, No. 16
20	VI CONCITATE	Driven by hostile force	Elements of Camerarius I-11 & I-17
30	SI RECTE FACIES	If you have lived righteously	Camerarius I-50
Back of 20 & 30	CESSANTE VENTO CONQUIESCemus	When the wind ceases we rest	Elements of Camerarius I-8
35	HINC OPES	Hence comes our power	Hopkinson creation
40	CONFEDERATION	—	Hopkinson creation suggested by elements in Camerarius I-30 & III-93
45	SIC FLORET RESPUBLICA	Thus flourishes the nation	Hopkinson creation Suggested by Camerarius III-90
50	PERENNIS	Everlasting	Hopkinson creation
55	POST NUBILA PHOEBUS	After the clouds comes the sun	Weigels p. 69, No. 6
60	DEUS REGNAT EXULTET TERRA	The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice	Hopkinson creation Suggested by Psalm 97
65	FIAT JUSTITIA	Let justice be done	Court insignia
70	VIM PROCELLARUM QUADRENNIUM SUSTINUIT	For four years it has withstood the force of storm	Hopkinson creation Suggested by Camerarius I-6 to 21
80	ET IN SEcula SEculorum FLORESCEBIT	It will flourish for ages & ages	Hopkinson creation Suggested by Camerarius I-6 to 21

\* *Recueil d'Emblemes* (Paris, 1696) by Nicholas Verrien has the same emblems as Weigels to a great extent. The Royal Politician (London, 1700) has the same emblems as Saavedra.

dividual colonies from 1723 through 1764 and had planned some of their insignia, such as the nature prints which he invented.<sup>10</sup>

Franklin was a sincere advocate of forming a stronger union between the individual colonies and expressed that thought with expressions such as "Join or die," "Our safety depends on our union," and "a cask of thirteen stout staves without a single hoop to hold them together."<sup>11</sup> The striking distinction in the originality and style of the Fugio and the 13 link devices from the classical and Latinized emblems and mottoes used for the original eleven emblems shows a creator at work rather than a copyist. If there had not been an emergency Franklin would probably have liked to create original mottoes for each of the May 10, 1775 issue.

Franklin's official connection with Continental Currency issues began on June 23, 1775, as heretofore pointed out, and must have ended on or before he left for Paris in November, 1776 after his appointment as U. S. Commissioner to France. Franklin was not in America when the devices attributed to Hopkinson were created and Hopkinson was not in the Continental Congress when the devices on the May 10, 1775 issue (first authorized on June 22, 1775) or the February 17, 1776 fractional issue were created.

If circumstantial evidence beyond a reasonable doubt is acceptable, then Franklin is the creator of the Fugio and 13 link devices on Continental Currency. Franklin can therefore be acknowledged as the originator of the design of the first official coin of the United States (the 1787 Fugio Cent) and the first pattern coin of the United States (the 1776 Continental Currency coinage). The intuition that so many numismatists had in calling the 1787

Fugio Cent "the Franklin Cent" appears fully justified.

## The Engraving Artists

The artists who cut the blocks from which design portions of Continental Currency were cast are as yet only to a minor degree identified. The records show that on October 10, 1775 David Rittenhouse collected \$48 for "36 cutts" which must have been for four borders for each of the nine denominations having border cuts in the first issue.<sup>10</sup> The workmanship may not necessarily have been that of Rittenhouse and the engraving of the emblem cuts was not included. James Smither of Philadelphia apparently did some or all of the engraving as William Dunlap, who was acquainted with the artists of the period, stated subsequently that Smither had done the work.<sup>11</sup> Such work by Smither had to be completed before his Tory feelings caused him to counterfeit Continental Currency and to be charged with treason.<sup>12</sup> The Fugio and the 13 link designs are identified on the 1776 Continental Currency coinage with the initials "EG" and that engraver has been identified as Elisha Gallaudet.<sup>13</sup>

The only other engraver who participated officially was a convicted counterfeiter, Henry Dawkins of New York. Dawkins had engraved plates to counterfeit the May 10, 1775 Continental Currency \$30 bill, the May 10, 1775 Connecticut 40 shilling bill and the December 7, 1775 Massachusetts 42 shilling bill.<sup>14</sup> Yet he was hired by officials of the Continental Congress to engrave the border cuts for the face as well as the panel surrounding the emblem on the back of the various denominations of the State issues guaranteed by the United States under the March 18, 1780 Resolution of the Continental Congress.<sup>15</sup> In addition, he modified some

<sup>10</sup> Eric P. Newman, "Nature Printing on Colonial and Continental Currency," *The Numismatist*, Vol. 78, No. 2-5, (Feb.-May, 1964), reprinted.

<sup>11</sup> William Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*, New York, 1834, p. 156.

<sup>12</sup> Eric P. Newman "Counterfeit Continental Currency Goes to War," *The Numismatist*, Vol. 70, No. 1, 2 (Jan., Feb., 1957) p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Eric P. Newman "The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets its Maker," *The Numismatist*, Vol. 72, No. 8 (Aug., 1959), p. 914.

<sup>14</sup> *Journal of the (New York) Provincial Congress*, Albany, 1842, Vol. I, p. 446.

<sup>15</sup> *Journals of the Continental Congress* (Oct. 27, 1780), Vol. 19, p. 983.



border cuts previously used on the face of the January 14, 1779 Continental Currency issue so that they could be reused on the back of those guaranteed state issues of 1780. The modification consisted of eliminating or changing the denomination insignia on the ten denominations of the 1779 issue which did not coincide with the denominations of the 1780 guaranteed issue.

How much more of the engraving any of the above artists did or whether any other artists participated is left to future research. In any event the artists were artisans and not the creators of the designs. Franklin is entitled to the credit for original designs during the 1775-76 period and Hopkinson is entitled to the credit for the original designs during the 1778-79 period.

## Librarians Report

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